

#### A PERIOD OF ARMED TRUCE

tion in Russia, when Gilan and Mazanderan were controlled by Kuchik Khan, and especially during the existence of the Soviet Republic there, two real workers' trade unions were created in Enzeli: a porters' union and a longshoremen's union. This initial development of trade unionism among the workers of northern Iran was due, according to Ossetrov, "to their greater knowledge of workers' movements in Russia." By 1921 eleven workers' unions existed in Teheran.<sup>25</sup> They grouped 8,250 members and were composed of hired laborers only. In the same year a Council of Trade Unions was created in Teheran, to which each union was to send three delegates. The council promptly decided to affiliate with the Red Profintern and informed Moscow accordingly. In Tabriz, which is an important industrial center, a trade unions' association called Kargaran (800 members) was formed and seemed to enjoy a major political influence. It had its own press organ, *Takammol*. In contrast to the north, the south of Iran did not prove to be a favorable ground for trade unionism. The Teheran Council of Trade Unions, despite repeated attempts, could not establish a working relationship with the workers in the south. Ossetrov commented about it with regret, inas-much as southern Iran with 47,000 workers employed in the British oil fields represented "a large field for the development of workers' organization."

The activity of the Trade Unions Council in Teheran proved moderately successful. One of its most important affiliates, the Printers' Union, succeeded in making a collective agreement with printing press owners that provided for the shortening of the work-

day to eight hours and for overtime pay and that covered several other points such as dismissals and medical care. The council was also politically active. It published the *Haqiqat* ("Truth"), a paper with a circulation of about two thousand, definitely Communist in tone.<sup>26</sup> *Haqiqat* insisted on denying that the trade union movement was caused by Bolshevik agitation. This did not prevent the govern-

25 These were: (i) printers, 200 members, one of the oldest trade unions in Iran, first created in 1908 in Teheran; (2) bakers, 3,000; (3) telegraphers, 564; (4) post office clerks, 100; (5) government schoolteachers, 400; (6) pastry bakers, 400; (7) store salesmen, 80; (8) tailors, 1,000; (9) shop clerks, 120; (10) brass workers, 150; (11) shoemakers, 1,800.

26 Ducrocq, *op. cit.*, p. 125.